

TO A DEAD BIRD.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

"But whither would conjecture stray."

Bird of the forest, beautiful and dead !

While in the twilight here I gaze on thee,
Strange fancies of the wild life that has fled,
Dimly and sadly gather over me.

Until, above thy still and silent sleep,
I can but bow my aching head and weep.

Alas, that when the spring-time's here to wake
The flowers and music of thy woodland halls,
Than whose glad voice so sweet a strain could make
In concert with the winds and water-falls—
In cold and hushed oblivion shouldst lie—
While things that suffer ask, in vain, to die !

But wert thou purely blest ? Ah, who can tell

But Bird-land has its sorrows ! It may be
That boundless love in thy wild breast did dwell

For some bright, winged thing—who flew from thee,
And left his scorn to pierce thy bleeding heart—
Till Death, in pity, drew away its dart !

Or thine, perchance, has been a perfect love,
(If any love can be without a sting !)

And thy lone mate may come to mourn alone

Thy blighted beauty, with a drooping wing,
Till, like all lonely mates, he seek relief—
In some new glory—for his transient grief !

Or thou mayst have been of a royal race !

And radiant throngs of minstrel-things to-day,
Ev'n in thine airy realm's remotest place,

May mourn—or joy—that thou hast past away !
For, gold and purple glitter on thy breast,
And thou art laid, right regally, to rest.

Was thy death tranquil ? Or, amid the glare

Of Heaven's fierce fire-arms was thy being sped
Or did some wing'd assassin of the air,

For hate—or envy—meet and strike thee dead !

Was life still blushing with youth's rosy glow,
Or, worn and wearied, wert thou glad to go ?

And was thy all of joy—or grief—on earth ?

Or art thou gone to try thy wing anew

Where glorious roses have their perfumed birth—

And woods are ever green—skies ever blue—

And breezy music gushes rich and warm,

With not a sigh—or *whisper of the storm* ?

Fit mausoleum is this hollow tree,

With faded leaves to pillow thy bright head,
And if such rest is all that's left for thee,

Methinks it is enough, sweet bird and dead !
For winds will sing and buds will burst above,
And I'll believe they left thee here in love !